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not done. He must approach her through her father. He can and does, however, propose in person to a widow or a divorced woman.

After marriage the Badawin takes his bride to the tent he has previously pitched for her, close to that of her father, and consummation takes place. Many are the curious eyes and ears which are concentrated on the bridal tent.

As with us, those chiefly interested in the marriage ceremony are the other women of the camp.

Slaves marrying go through the same ceremonies as the freeborn, the master and mistress of the slave acting the part of the parents of the bridegroom: and as much interest is evinced in the marriage of one of their slaves as in that of one of the family.

The Badawin's love for cohabitation is well known, and as I have said elsewhere, sex is to him the supreme joy of life. Both bride and bridegroom indulge riotously in this honeymoon period. So wildly passionate is their love-making that I have known of a man breaking two of his wife's ribs on the first night of their marriage. As soon as the wife finds herself with child, she lets the other women know about it, and it becomes the occasion for much rejoicing. She continues cohabiting with her husband as a matter of course till just before the baby's birth.

DIVORCE

Divorce procedure is simplicity itself. The man need only say to his wife before witnesses that he does not want her any more. He has to make the statement *three times* for it to be valid: *Mo arid ik, mo arid ik, mo arid ik*. No disgrace attaches to the woman, who takes the matter quite philosophically, and proceeds to look for another husband.

If the man divorces the woman, she keeps the *jehaz* he has given her, which is sufficient provision for her for a considerable time, or till she gets a second husband. It must not be forgotten that she has nearly always invested her *jehaz* in buying a camel or some sheep and has thus become an owner of livestock.

The point to emphasize is that no disgrace whatsoever clings to divorce, and if the girl is fair, or was the wife of a big shaikh, there is

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over the four feet, etc. Only at dawn do these women "spoil-sports" withdraw to the outer room, after locking the bride and bridegroom up in one stifling room together. Later, when the bridegroom craves to come out, they open the door and go in and wash the bride all over, change her clothes, and redress her for a fresh visit of the bridegroom. This takes place a couple of hours after (see Hamda's sister's marriage in Kuwait on 4th July, 1935).

Amuba, the pretty married daughter of Ibrahim al Muzaiyin of Riyadh, told me on 12th July, 1935, that the Arabs had a saying that: "A woman was like a *jirba* (leather bag) of dates; when full, she was useful in more ways than one, when empty she was of no further use and could be thrown away", referring to the uselessness of a woman who could no longer bear children. In throwing her away the husband casually said, *kafatkiti wa nafatkiti*, i.e. "You can go, but I keep any children you have had".*

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS AMONG IRAQ TRIBES

A bride's trousseau consists entirely of household effects: cooking utensils, pillows, cushions, blankets, *iqwa*, *lahaf*, bridal-bed and, of course, new clothing for herself. The bride never brings such things as a horse or mare to her husband, though I have heard Europeans say she does. Her purchase money is usually sent to her father by the prospective bridegroom a fortnight or month before the marriage. Among the Iraq tribes this money is almost invariably handed over to the daughter, with an additional sum from the father himself. Aided, of course, by her mother and female relatives, the daughter then converts the money into jewellery. The cost of an Iraq tribal girl is usually in the vicinity of Rs.200; the price of a shaikh's daughter varies, but does not as a rule run to more than Rs.1,000. As in the desert, a man if he possibly can always marries his cousin. She is supposed to be his from the day she is born. The Su'adun Shaikhs of the Muntafiq (Euphrates) often keep their female cousins single till the day of their death, in order to keep property in the family. It is an unpleasant habit, and is widely condemned by other Arabs.

* A woman who has been divorced may not re-marry till after three lunar months —*iddat*, as the Muslims put it, *illa ba'ad shahrik hamsa wa shahrik ghasra*. This is to ensure that she is not with child by the man who divorces her.

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CHAPTER X

Children

BIRTH

842 Every Arab woman's greatest desire in life is to have a child. She is brought up with this idea from childhood. The natural desire to become a mother is reinforced by the reproach attached to childlessness and by a woman's knowledge that she will be divorced if she does not produce a son and heir for her husband.

842 791 If she does not conceive soon after marriage, she often resorts to various herb concoctions made from the grasses of the field, and drinks these: frequently with ill result. The "wise" old women of every tribe are adepts in compounding draughts to stimulate fertility and also in preparing of "love philtres", for those who need them. They also claim to be able to interpret dreams. Most old women go in for this form of helping their younger sisters.

791 Fortune-telling is not uncommonly also practised by these old cronies, though in Wahhabi land it is considered sinful and is not openly pursued.

844 The average girl's strength at the birth of her first and subsequent children is quite phenomenal. I knew of a Murairi girl, for instance, who came into hospital at Kuwait one evening to have her baby. The child was born at 2 a.m. and two hours later the girl wrapped up her child, slung it over her back, and in the momentary absence of the lady doctor, departed on foot to her people camped twenty miles away.

Among the shepherd tribes of Iraq women produce children while the tribe is on the march. Migration, of course, cannot stop. The woman drops behind, has her baby, at times with only one woman to assist her, and after washing it herself in clean sand, picks it up and follows the tribe. She knows she will be left behind, perhaps to die, unless she keeps up with the others. The recognised birth congratulation formula is *mubārakūn fī kul mawlūd al Sa'ūd*.

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Birth of a Baby

Chap. X

A man cohabits with his wife until close on the birth of their child. 543
As soon as the baby is born, however, the mother becomes "unclean" 846
(*nagis* or *najis*) and the husband cannot go near her for forty days.
This rule is carefully observed among all classes.

After a child is born, a very common method of treating the womb 846
is to pack it with common salt. This is a very painful operation, and results in great suffering later, for a thickening of certain tissues supervenes, with disastrous consequences. The Mission hospital authorities in Kuwait and Bahrain are never tired of preaching the evil of the practice, but with little result.

After the birth of a child Badawin women, and more especially Arab townswomen, resort to various drugs, etc., to reduce the size of the vagina to normal, or less than normal. This "pleases the husband", they say. Alum is the basic principal of the drugs employed. Zahwa, Shazmari wife of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ad of the Abda,* told me this in April 1931 on one of my wife's and my many visits.

Many women, having had two or three children, dread to have 542
more, and my wife has frequently been asked both in the town and in the desert of Kuwait how they can prevent further conception. It is universally believed among them that European women know many methods of contraception, but are unwilling to divulge their secrets. Among Badawin generally, if a woman has difficulty in bearing 545
her child, a mare is brought in to her apartment or the portion of tent set apart for her; barley is then placed in her lap, and the mare is induced to eat. If the animal whinnies and eats, all is well, two or three rifle shots are fired at the same time, and the woman is thus given strength to bring forth.

It sometimes happens that immediately after birth the mother 844
becomes what the Badawin call *maktubat* (mad), and unable to speak.† This is considered a very dangerous state, and according to them will result in death unless she can be induced to speak. In such situations also, a mare is hastily sent for and brought to the woman's side and offered barley from her lap. If the mare eats, the woman's tongue is loosed and her reason returns. If not, according to the common belief, the woman is sure to die.

On 20th February, 1933, in Kuwait, my own mare was borrowed

* Shazmari tribe. † This episode is probably a form of hysteria.